

In the Realm of Music and Art

Distinguished Frenchman Will Again Conduct Here

D'Indy, Composer, Teacher, Author, To Be Guest of N. Y. Symphony Orchestra; Stravinsky's Debussy Symphony Hissed in London

By Katharine Wright

Last year an important feature of the musical season was the invasion of foreign conductors. England, Holland and Italy were brilliantly represented by Messrs. Coates, Mengelberg and Toscanini. Next season composers will have their turn, when Messrs. Strauss and D'Indy will conduct their own works in this country.

Like the German Strauss, the Frenchman, Vincent d'Indy, now seventy years old, has visited America before. In 1905 he conducted concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and other American cities. Next December he will conduct the New York Symphony Orchestra at a pair of concerts in Carnegie Hall.

D'Indy is known here chiefly by his Symphony No. 2, in B flat minor; his "L'Éclaircie" variations, his symphony for orchestra and piano on the "Song of a French Mountaineer," and a so-called symphony, "A Summer's Day on the Mountain." His "Legend of St. Christopher" was given by the New York Symphony Society last year.

The son of aristocratic and wealthy parents, he was intended for the law and against his wishes studied for the bar, while his interest in music was encouraged by his father, an amateur violinist, and his grandmother, Mme. Therese d'Indy, an excellent musician, who taught him the rudiments of the art. An uncle, Saint-Ange Wilfred d'Indy, a popular composer, whose romances, chamber pieces and light operas were favorites in Parisian salons between 1840 and 1865, also contributed to his musical education. It was he who put into the young man's hands Berlioz's treatise on instrumentation.

D'Indy first took pianoforte lessons of Diemer and harmony lessons of Lavignac. During the Franco-Prussian War he served as a volunteer in the 105th Regiment and took part in the defense of Paris, notably in the Battle of Montreuil. After the war he gave up the idea of becoming a lawyer and henceforth devoted himself to music.

It was then that he met Henri Duparc, who took him into the Wagnerian fold, where he has remained ever since. Duparc also introduced him to César Franck, and in 1872 D'Indy submitted a string quartet to the Belgian master for criticism. Franck, although he received the young man with customary kindness, showed him that the quartet was hopelessly bad, in spite of certain good ideas, yet he encouraged him to try again. Immediately D'Indy began to study composition in all its branches with Franck and in 1873 entered his organ class in the Conservatory, where he remained two years and succeeded in taking a first accessit. Then, believing that the study of composition at the Conservatory was not wholly serious, he became a private pupil of Franck. It is not unlikely that the pupils of Franck at the Conservatory at this time suffered under the ban, was only tolerated by the most conservative, who

shuddered at his reputation of being an "Independent." In 1873 D'Indy became acquainted with the "Deutsches Requiem" of Brahms, and his admiration for it was so great that he determined to make a pilgrimage, in the hope of seeing the composer and of obtaining advice from him. He went to Weimar, where he met Liszt, and he was, in a way, his pupil for some time. He then went to Vienna and found that Brahms had gone to Bavaria. He followed him and finally found him in Tutzing, but whether Brahms was not in a mood to receive strangers or whether he was absorbed by works that demanded concentration, the interview was short and unsatisfactory, despite the letters D'Indy had from Saint-Saëns and Franck.

D'Indy felt the need of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the details of the orchestra. For this purpose he entered the Society of the Chatelet Concerts as chorus master and second drummer, and he filled these positions until 1878, when he retired on account of a disagreement with Colonne, the conductor.

His "Picolomini" overture was performed at one of Pasdeloup's concerts in 1875. In 1882, a little comic opera in one act, "Attendez-moi sous l'orme," with a libretto based on Regnard's comedy, was produced at the Opera Comique, and puzzled habitués accustomed to simpler harmonies and conventional tunes.

Other works produced before 1885—"The Enchanted Forest," an orchestral ballade (1878); "The Ride of the Cid," for baritone, chorus and orchestra (1879); the "Wallenstein" trilogy. In 1885 D'Indy was awarded the prize of the City of Paris for his "Song of the Bell" (after Schiller), a romantic symphony for solo voices, double chorus and orchestra, which was produced at the expense of the city and performed several times under the direction of Lamoureux. The tenor, Anton Van Dyck, then at the beginning of his career, sang the music of Wilhelm, the bell founder.

In 1887 D'Indy became chorus master of the Lamoureux concerts and he prepared the choruses for the first production of "Lohengrin" in Paris in the Eden Theater, May 3, 1887. Due to Chauvinism only one performance took place.

He visited Bayreuth several times and attended the first performance of the "Ring" and of "Parsifal" with Franck, Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, Castillon, Chausson and Duparc, he was a founder of the National School of Music. After the death of Franck he was made president of that society. In 1893 the government appointed him one of a committee to recommend reforms in the Paris Conservatory, but the professors of that institution made such vigorous protests against the idea that the committee was abandoned. In 1895 a professorship in the Conservatory was offered him, but he refused the position as he wished to preserve his liberty. The next year he founded with Charles Bordes, the director of the "Singers of St. Gervais," and Alexander Guilmant, the famous organist a school of music, the Schola Cantorum, of which he is still the head.

D'Indy was always a nature lover. His family came originally from Verdun, in Ardeche, a department formerly a portion of the Province Languedoc. D'Indy has long been in the habit of spending his vacations in the picturesque mountains of the Avennes. He has also delighted in the Tyrol, the Engadine, the Black Forest; he has

listened intently to what Millet called "the cry of the earth." In a letter written while at Vernoux in 1887 he said: "At this moment I see the snowy summits of the Alps, the near mountains, the plain of the Rhone, the pine woods that I know so well, and the green, rich harvest which has not yet been gathered. It is a true pleasure to be here after the labors and the vexations of the winter. What they call at Paris 'the artistic world' seems afar off and a trifling thing. Here is true repose, here one feels at the true source of all art."

His love of nature is seen in "Poème des Montagnes," suite for piano (1881); "La Forêt Enchantée," symphonic ballade (1878); the symphony for orchestra and piano on a mountain air (1886), fantasia for oboe and orchestra on some folk-tunes (1888), "Tableaux de Voyage," pieces for piano (1889), and chamber music by him suggests the austerity of mountain scenery.

As a boy D'Indy loved folk tales and fantastic stories. He also read eagerly the works of Uhland, Hoffman, Poe. Then he turned to the worship of Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Schiller and Goethe. Plaubert, especially by his "Templum of St. Anthony," made a profound impression on him. In painting he prefers the masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and he confesses frankly that he finds greater pleasure and inspiration in the presence of the Assyrian art long before Christ than in the presence of the art known to Pericles. According to Imbert d'Indy has been known to remain for hours in contemplation before the pictures of certain primitive German or Flemish painters, while the works of the Italian painters of the Renaissance leave him unmoved.

In addition to the works already mentioned D'Indy has composed the operas "Fervat" and "The Stranger," which have been produced; incidental music to Mendes's "Medea," "Sauge Fleurie," a legend for orchestra; "Fleur," orchestral variations; choral and variations for saxophone or cello and orchestra, and symphony No. 2. He has also written a sonata for violin and piano; a piano quartet, a suite in the old style for trumpet, flutes and strings; a trio for piano, clarinet and cello; two string quartets, "Chansons et Danes" for wind instruments; "Schumanniana," for piano; "Helvetia," three waltzes for piano; "Mary Magdalene," a cantata for solo voice and female chorus; "Deus Israel," a motet for six voices unaccompanied; "Clair de Lune," for voice and orchestra (poem by Hugo); "Sur la mer," chorus for female voices, and a few songs. He has written an elaborate and valuable treatise on musical composition and has collaborated with Tiersot in editions of folk songs of certain French provinces.

His views on "Sophistication in Art," vigorously expressed in an article written for the French magazine Comedie, at one time caused the outbreak of a violent polemical discussion in the Paris press. Bitter letters were written by Albert Carre and Jules Bois, and not content with verbal sword play M. Bois, author and authority on demonology and black magic, now living in Chicago, challenged D'Indy to a duel with pistols, which took place in January, 1908.

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A Russian Tribute

To Claude Debussy

Some months ago a special number of La Revue Musicale was devoted to the memory of Claude Achille Debussy. There were articles by leading French authorities on musical matters, and short memorial compositions by ultra-modernists of France were included. A Russian has lately celebrated the memory of the late composer by a symphony. H. A. S. in The Westminster Gazette, has recorded his impressions of Stravinsky's "Debussy" symphony, which was played by the London Symphony Orchestra for the first time in London, early in June:

"London music lovers have been having a stimulating time just lately. 'Le

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heard when dealing with the work of such an undoubted master as Stravinsky. But it would be the merest hypocrisy to pretend to any sort of understanding of such incredible music as this, which caused one of our most profound and progressively inclined composers almost to foam at the mouth with rage and indignation last night.

"Now and again, indeed, the only possible explanation seemed to be that the composer was deliberately pulling the legs of his admirers and trying just how much they would swallow in the way of cacophony and incoherence. But then the nature of the work, which is a tribute to the memory of Debussy, obviously puts this explanation out of court, and so one must assume that the composer himself intends it all quite seriously, and simply confess one's self totally baffled by its procedure.

"Apart from the dissonances and unintelligibility, what was so surprising about the work—which it will be remembered, is written for wind instruments only—is the extraordinary infelicity of the scoring. Stravinsky has shown himself—in his 'Petroushka,' 'L'Oiseau de Feu' and other works—before all else an orchestral colorist, and it might have been supposed, therefore, that in this respect at least he would have achieved something remarkable. Precisely the reverse, however, is in fact the case. His scoring in this instance is almost thoroughly out of tune, and it will be remembered, is written for wind instruments only—is the extraordinary infelicity of the scoring. Stravinsky has shown himself—in his 'Petroushka,' 'L'Oiseau de Feu' and other works—before all else an orchestral colorist, and it might have been supposed, therefore, that in this respect at least he would have achieved something remarkable. Precisely the reverse, however, is in fact the case. 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